

# WESLEYAN TRACTS.

LARGE SERIES.—No. I. PART 2.

**SLAVERY—A SIN AGAINST GOD.**

## ARGUMENT FIFTH:

**THE BIBLE CONDEMNS SLAVERY UNDER THE NAME OF MAN STEALING.**

That man-stealing is condemned in the Bible will not be denied. Ex. xxi. 16. “He that stealeth a man and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.” St. Paul tells us, 1 Tim. i. 10, that the law of God “is made for men stealers.” The only question about which there can be any dispute is this; is American slavery, as it now exists, man-stealing?

I. American slavery had its origin in man-stealing.

1. The facts, as generally understood, are such as to stamp the whole business of the foreign slave trade with the odious name of man-stealing. No matter who was engaged in it, saint or devil, it was nevertheless man-stealing. The business commenced by stealing such persons as they could catch along the coast, and force away from country,

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John Hauxwell

home and friends, to live, suffer and die in bondage among strangers. When the increasing market could not be supplied in this way, other means were resorted to. The kidnappers would land for purposes of trade, and while trading, would pour out to their unsuspecting customers the intoxicating drink, who, not being acquainted with the power of ardent spirit, would soon become helpless, and then while drunk the pale-faced demons would secure them. When they awoke from their drunkenness, they found themselves, not like Noah under the protection of affectionate sons, but in chains and in the hell of the slave ship. But at last, to supply the increasing demand, war was resorted to, which was no less man stealing. The wars, it should be understood, were commenced for the express purpose of obtaining slaves, hence, it was stealing on a larger scale. If two men go and take one it is stealing; if ten go and take five, it is stealing; if one hundred go and take fifty, it is stealing; and if one thousand go and take five hundred, it is no less man-stealing.

2. The law of our country deems it man-stealing. It is pronounced piracy, and punished by death by the laws of the United States. It is no more morally wrong now, than when it was tolerated: hence, it was always wrong.

II. The present race or generation of slaves can be held by no better title or authority than that by which their stolen fathers and mothers were held. They were originally stolen, and, of course, there was

no valid title to them ; if, therefore, there is now a title to those bondmen and bondwomen, it has been obtained or originated since their fathers and mothers were stolen. We demand at what period in the dark history of slavery, this supposed title to these human beings began to exist. As there was no title at first, they being stolen, it follows that there can be no title now, that they are stolen persons still, unless it can be shown when, under what circumstances, and upon what principles the title originated, and began to exist.

By the law of slavery, the condition of the offspring follows the condition of the mother. Let us then suppose what is the fact in the case,—some men-stealers, for whom the law of God was made, went to Africa, and stole a helpless female. Had he any right or title to her? Certainly not. The next step in this infamous business was, the man-thief sold this stolen female to a Southern planter. Had the planter any title to her? Certainly not; for he could have none only what he bought; and he could buy none only what the thief had to sell; and he had no title to sell, and therefore he could sell none; and therefore the planter could buy none of him; and therefore the planter could have no title. This is all just as certain as it is that one man cannot communicate to another what he has not got. As the thief had no title to his stolen victim, he could communicate no title to the man to whom he sold.

The third step in the progress of slavery

is, this enslaved female had offspring in her bonds. Had the planter, who held her without title, a title to her child as his property? Slavery itself does not pretend to any title to the children which is not founded upon a supposed title to the mother; hence, as there was no title to the mother, there can be none to the child. As the mother was a stolen person in his hands, so is the child a stolen person in his hands if he restrains it as his property. Slavery, therefore, is man-stealing, and must remain man-stealing so long as it shall be continued.

It can make no difference in moral principle, from what particular place we steal a human being, whether from Africa or in America. Now, it appears, from the boasted chart of the nation's rights, that every child, born in this land, has an inalienable right to liberty, as much so as children now born in Africa or in any other country. Where, then, is the difference in moral principle, whether we go to Africa and take a child, and bring it here for a slave, or take one born here? The child, born of the enslaved mother in South Carolina, has the same inalienable right to liberty, the gift of God, as the child born in Africa. Where is the justice? Where is the consistency? If the law of the nation, which declares that he who brings children from Africa to make slaves of them, shall be hanged as a pirate upon the high seas, be right, then he who takes children born in this land, and holds them as property and as slaves, ought to be hanged as a land pirate; for the one has the

same inalienable right to liberty as the other.

To invalidate these arguments, we must deny the truth of the Declaration of American Independence, we must disprove the unity of human nature, that "God has made of one blood all nations of men," equal in natural rights; and we must falsify the universal conviction of mankind, which each feels, that he was born free, and has a right to himself.

We will close this argument by saying that American slavery is essentially man-stealing; that the Bible condemns man-stealing, and therefore the Bible condemns slavery.

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#### ARGUMENT SIXTH:

THE BIBLE FURTHER CONDEMNS SLAVERY SPECIFICALLY BY CONDEMNING THE TRAFFIC IN HUMAN BEINGS.

Deut. xxiv. 7. "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandise of him, or selleth him; then that thief shall die; and thou shalt put evil away from among you."

This text most clearly condemns, not only the act of stealing men, but the act of making merchandize of men. The principle of traffic in human beings is condemned. There is only one point on which the advocate of slavery can hang an objection and that is the

fact that it simply condemns making merchandise of the children of Israel. This is fully answered by the remark that Israel after the flesh, cannot be more sacred in the eye of God, than Israel after the Spirit. If it was wrong to make merchandise of a Jew, because he was a Jew, it must be wrong to make merchandise of a Christian, because he is a Christian.

Chap xxi. 14. "And it shall be, if thou have no delight in her, then thou shalt let her go whither she will ; but thou shalt not sell her for money, thou shalt not make merchandise of her."

This is spoken of a female captive taken in war, it fully condemns the idea of selling human beings.

Amos ii. 6. "Thus saith the Lord ; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof ; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes."

On this text it may be remarked.

1. The slaves are often *righteous*, so that it is true to the very letter, that the righteous are sold for silver.

2. The slaves are all *poor* and are often bartered and gambled away for a consideration as small as a pair of shoes.

Zech. xi. 4, 5. "Thus saith the Lord my God ; Feed the flock of the slaughter, whose possessors slay them, and hold themselves not guilty : and they that sell them say, Blessed be the Lord ; for I am rich : and their own shepherds pity them not."

If there was ever a true picture, this is a

true picture of slavery : The members of the flock of Jesus Christ are sold, "and they that sell them say blessed be the Lord, for I am rich ; and their own shepherds pity them not."

Joel iii. 3. "And they have cast lots for my people ; and have given a boy for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they might drink."

That every crimé here condemned is part and parcel of American slavery, cannot be denied. The right of property in man is the foundation of these crimes. How often are slaves exchanged one for another, so that it is literally true that a boy is given for a harlot. Again, how often is it the case in their gambling and drinking revels that slaveholders pawn their servants for their bills, or gamble them away, so that it is literally true that a girl is sold for wine that they may drink.

In concluding this argument, two things are to be noticed.

1. The Bible, as has been shown, clearly condemns the traffic in human beings.

2. American slavery assumes the right of buying and selling human beings as personal chattles.

From the above propositions it follows that the Bible condemns slavery.

## ARGUMENT SEVENTH :

THE BIBLE FURTHER CONDEMNS SLAVERY SPECIFICALLY BY CONDEMNING INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE.

That slavery is involuntary servitude will not be denied : Indeed it is only involuntary slavery that we labor to condemn in these numbers. The only question that needs to be settled in this argument, is the wrong of forcing one man to serve another against his will. We know of no scriptures, which, by any fair construction, can be made to justify compulsory service. But we will quote a few texts which, in our own mind, condemn it.

Deut. xxiii. 15, 16.—“Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee ; He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best ; thou shalt not oppress him.”

This text most clearly condemns involuntary service, for it most clearly justifies the servant in leaving his master and protects him in it against the pursuits of his master, and even forbids the people among whom he may go to deliver him up. It appears from this text that there was such a thing as involuntary servitude, and in this text it is effectually condemned. It is clear that the Jews were forbidden to compel service against the will of the servant. This will appear still more plain from another text. This subject is treated at large by the pro-



phet, and to save the reader the trouble of turning to his Bible, while reading this argument, we quote the prophet at length.

Jer. xxxiv. 6. "Then Jeremiah the prophet spake all these words unto Zedekiah king of Judah in Jerusalem :

7. When the king of Babylon's army fought against Jerusalem, and against all the cities of Judah that were left, against Lachish, and against Azekah ; for these defenced cities remained of the cities of Judah.

8. This is the word that came unto Jeremiah from the Lord, after that the king Zedekiah had made a covenant with all the people which were at Jerusalem, to proclaim liberty unto them ;

9. That every man should let his man servant, and every man his maid servant, being a Hebrew or a Hebrewess, go free ; that none should serve himself of them ; and to wit, of a Jew his brother.

10. Now when all the princes and all the people, which had entered into the covenant, heard that every one should let his man servant, and every one his maid servant, go free that none should serve themselves of them any more, then they obeyed, and let them go.

11. But afterwards they turned and caused the servants and the hand maids, whom they had let go free, to return, and brought them into subjection for servants and for hand maids.

12. Therefore the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying,

13. Thus saith the Lord, the God of Is-

rael ; I made a covenant with your fathers in the day that I brought them forth out of the house of bondmen, saying,

14. At the end of seven years let ye go every man his brother a Hebrew, which hath been sold unto thee ; and when he hath served thee six years, thou shalt let him go free from thee : but your fathers hearkened not unto me, neither inclined their ear.

15. And ye were now turned, and had done right in my sight, in proclaiming liberty to every man to his neighbor ; and ye had made a covenant before me in the house which is called by my name :

16. But ye turned and polluted my name, and caused every man his servant, and every man his hand maid, whom he had set at liberty at their pleasure, to return, and brought them into subjection, to be unto you for servants and for hand maids.

16. Therefore thus saith the Lord ; ye have not hearkened unto me, in proclaiming liberty every one to his brother, and every man to his neighbor : behold, I proclaim a liberty for you, saith the Lord, to the sword, to the pestilence, and to the famine ; and I will make you to be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth."

The fourteenth verse speaks of being sold for seven years, but it is obvious the price for which a man was sold was his own, and went into his own pocket, for the benefit of his family, or at most to pay his debts, the amount of which he had previously enjoyed and consumed. What is here called selling was obviously nothing more than a contract

for service with pay in advance ; and hence the law was like our statute of limitation. It forbade men to make a contract for service for more than seven years. The seven years' service was voluntary, because agreed upon by the parties, and paid for in advance ; but when they kept the servant beyond that time, it became involuntary, and God condemned it, and punished them for it.

Isa. lviii. 6. "*Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free ?*"

The expression, "*let the oppressed go free,*" is a full condemnation of involuntary servitude. To compel any man to serve another against his will, who is out of his minority and uncondemned for crime, is to oppress him ; and the command to let the oppressed go *free*, condemns such forced service.

American slavery is a system of force and violence, and cannot be maintained for a day, only by a constant war upon the very life of the slaves. For all this there is no warrant in the Bible, but much against it. Involuntary service must be wrong, from the fact that the violence necessary to maintain it is wrong. Whips for the naked back, thumb screws, chains, prisons, and other modes of torture, to subdue persons unconvicted of crime, have no warrant in the Gospel, and cannot be justified, only upon a principle which will justify every species of violence men may choose to practice one upon another.

## ARGUMENT EIGHTH.

SLAVERY IS A WORK WITHOUT WAGES, WHICH IS CONDEMNED IN THE BIBLE.

Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. "Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers that be in thy land within thy gates. At his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee."

It may be said that this text does not meet the case, because it speaks of hired servant, but this cannot alter the principle involved. The text condemns the act of withholding what is a man's due for his labor, and this every slaveholder does. One man voluntarily goes to work with the expectation of wages, while the employer seizes upon another and compels him to work, *nolens volens*. We ask is not the man who is compelled to work as much entitled to pay as he who works voluntarily? Certainly he is. This is kept back, and in this the slave is oppressed.

Jer. xxii. 13, 14. "Wo unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong; that useth his neigh-

bor's service without wages, and giveth him not for his work ; that saith, I will build me a wide house and a large chambers, and cutteth him out windows ; and it is ceiled with cedar, and painted with vermilion."

This most certainly meets the case exactly ; nothing is said about hiring men, but simply using their service without wages, which every slaveholder does. Men are here absolutely forbidden to use their neighbor's service without wages, and as slavery is a system of work without wages, it is here forbidden.

Hab. ii. 9, 10, 11, 12. "Wo to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil ! Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people, and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Wo to him that buildeth a town with blood, and establisheth a city by iniquity.

To establish a city by iniquity is to build up a city with the fruit of the unpaid toil of slaves, and every city in the south is built in this way.

Mal. iii. 5. "And I will come near to you to judgment : and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against abulterers, and against false swearers, and against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me saith the Lord of hosts."

James v. 4. "Behold, the hire of the laborers which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth ; and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth."

The above texts are sufficient to prove that the Bible forbids one class of men to use the labor of another class, without paying them for their work, and in forbidding this, it forbids slavery. Some may say that slaves are paid in food and raiment. These are bestowed only so far as they promote the master's interest, and they are not wages any more than the oats a man feeds his horse, or the grease he puts upon his carriage, or the manure with which he dresses his field, are wages. Wages is the amount stipulated and paid for service, but there is no stipulation between the master and slave ; the slave has no voice in determining the amount he receives ; this is unknown to him at the time labor is demanded and rendered, and is determined by the arbitrary will of the master. to constitute wages, the amount rendered for service must be a matter of mutual agreement between the parties. But as slavery is a system of absolute rule on the part of the master, and of coerced submission on the part of the slave, without the consent of his will to condition or stipulation, the very idea of wages is excluded.

## ARGUMENT NINTH.

## THE BIBLE CONDEMNS SLAVERY UNDER THE NAME OF OPPRESSION.

Two points are to be settled, viz., that slavery is identical with oppression, and how the Bible treats oppression.

What is oppression? According to Dr. Webster, oppression is "the imposition of unreasonable burdens, either in taxes or service." An oppressor, according to the same authority, is "one that imposes unjust burdens on others; one that harasses others with unjust laws or unreasonable severity." This is a life like picture of slavery and slaveholders. It must be the extreme of oppression. For one man, because he has the power so to do, to compel his neighbor to work for him twenty-five days in a year, without his consent, would be oppression, and will it not be oppression to compel him to work the whole year? If slavery be not oppression, than may an evil be changed to a virtue by increasing it in magnitude. To compel a man to work without wages every tenth year of his life, would be oppression by univereal consent, but to compel him to work life-long, commencing his toils at the misty dawn of existence, and closing them amid the gathering shadows of its dark going down, is no oppression! According to this logic, to rob a man of a part of his la-

bor would be wrong, but to take the whole would make it right! To rob a man of a part of his time, would be a crime, but to rob him of all his time, of himself, his head and heart, his body and limbs, his mind and will, and all he can do, possess and acquire, renders it an act of righteousness!

But the Bible will settle the question of oppression.

Ex. iii. 9. "Now therefore, behold, the cry of the children of Israel is come unto me: and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the Egyptians oppress them."

What then did the Egyptians do to the Israelites? They compelled them to work for the government.

Here we have the history of the matter, as follows:—Ex. i. 8–11. "Now there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph. And he said unto his people, Behold, the people of the children of Israel *are* more and mightier than we: Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass, that, when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over them task-masters, to afflict them with their burdens. And they built for Pharaoh treasure-cities, Pithom and Raamses."

This was oppression which awakened the sympathies of Jehovah, and brought out the thickest and heaviest of his thunders. Yet he bore it longer than American slavery has existed. But what was there in that more enormous than American slavery? Absolute-



ly nothing. They placed task-masters over them, and so do they place task masters over the slaves. And if, as a last resort, the Egyptians ordered the children of the Hebrews to be destroyed ; the slaveholders claim the children of the slaves as their property, and sell them in the market for gain, which is worse than to be strangled at birth. It is clear that slavery is oppression of the worst degree.

But how does God deal with oppression, and oppressors ? He condemns oppression and oppressors ; he commands his people to relieve the oppressed ; he threatens oppressors with terrible punishment, and has already expended more of his thunders, and more of the phials of his wrath on the heads of oppressors than on all other sinners.

Gen. xxv. 17. Ye shall not therefore oppress one another ; but thou shalt fear thy God : for I *am* the LORD thy God."

Here oppression is not only forbidden, but it is done in a manner which implies that it is inconsistent with the fear of God.

Deut. xxxiii. 15, 16. Thou shalt not deliver unto his master the servant which is escaped from his master unto thee : He shall dwell with thee, *even* among you, in that place which he shall choose in one of thy gates, where it liketh him best : thou shalt not oppress him." This clearly forbids the oppression of a self emancipated servant.

Deut. xxiv. 14. Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, *whether he be* of thy brethern, or of thy strangers that *are* in thy land within thy gates :"

This text specially forbids the oppression of a servant that is a Jew or a Gentile.

Psal. x. 17, 18. "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. To judge the fatherless and the oppressed; that the man of the earth may no more oppress." This appears to look forward to a day when oppression shall cease from the earth. Will there be any slavery there?

Psa. lxxiii. 8, 9. "They are corrupt and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression : they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens : and their tongue walketh through the earth. A clearer description could not well be given of modern slaveholders, and their abettors ; they speak wickedly *concerning* oppression. They invade the rights and government of God ; they set their mouth against the heavens.

Psa. xii. 5. "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise saith the Lord ; I will set *him* in safety *from him* *ihat* puffeth at him."

Psa. lxxii. 4. "He shall judge the poor of the people, he shall save the children of the needy, and shall break in pieces the oppressor."

Isa. i. 17. Learn to do well : seek judgment, relieve the oppressed ; judge the fatherless ; plead for the widow."

Isa. lviii. 9. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen ? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

This commands the release of all the oppressed ; and the expression "let the oppressed go free," clearly forbids involuntary servitude, and commands the freedom of every slave in the land.

Prov. iii. 31. "Envy thou not the oppressor, and choose none of his ways."

This clearly forbids oppression in all its practical aspects.

Prov. xiv. 31. He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his maker : but he that honoreth him hath mercy on the poor."

All slaveholders oppress the poor, and of course reproach their maker.

Prov. xxii. 22. "Rob not the poor because he is poor ; neither oppress the afflicted in the gate."

The afflicted are oppressed in the gates of every slaveholding city in this nation.

Jer. vii. 5—7. "For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings ; if ye thoroughly execute judgement between a man and his neighbor ; If ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt : then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever."

Jer. xxi. 12. "O house of David, thus saith the Lord ; execute judgment in the morning, and deliver *him that is* spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor, lest my fury go out like fire, and burn that none can quench *it*, because of the evil of your doings. Behold. I *am* against thee, O inhabitant of the val-

ley, *and* rock of the plain saith the Lord ; which say, who shall come down against us ? or, who shall enter into our habitations ?”

Eccle. iv. 1. “So I returned, and considered all the oppressions that are done under the sun : and, behold, the tears of *such as were* oppressed, and they had no comforter ; and on the side of their oppressors *there was* power ; but they had no comforter.”

Had the inspired writer had his prophetic eye on the scenes of our own slaveholding land, listening to, and beholding the groans and sighs and tears, and wrongs of the sugar plantations, and the rice swamps, he would not have drawn a truer picture of those sorrow burdened and blood stained fields.

Eccle. vii. 7. “Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad.”

Ezek. xxii. 7. In thee have they set light by father and mother ; in the midst of thee have they dealt by oppression with the stranger ; in thee have they vexed the fatherless and the widow.”

Every word of this is true of slavery.

Verse 29. “The people of the land have used oppression, and exercised robbery, and have vexed the poor and needy ; yea, they have oppressed the stranger wrongfully.”

Zeph. iii. 1. “Wo to her that is filthy and polluted, to the oppressing city !

This is applicable to any and every slaveholding city.

Mal. iii. 5. “And I will come near to you to judgment ; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adul

terers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the Lord of hosts."

If a man were to stand up in any of the slaveholding cities or towns in the southern states, and proclaim the above as a communication from himself, and as expressive of his views of the manner in which God will deal with the people, he would be understood to speak of slavery, and he arrested for the same. How clear is it then that the text comprehends slavery and denounces it.

Only a part of the texts have been quoted above which relate to the subject, but they are sufficient to prove that slavery is comprehended in the sin of oppression, and that it is classed with the worst of crimes. Here the direct argument in proof of the sinfulness of slavery closes, and if it is not a sin against God and man, it must be difficult to find sin developed in human society, for it embraces the essential elements of every possible crime. It is known that some persons have claimed that the scriptures justify and support slavery, but a refutation of this position, by a thorough examination of those texts which are attempted to be pressed in to the service of slavery, must be left for a separate treatise.